# Individual Employment Plan (IEP) Policy

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**Purpose**
The IEP is the roadmap to self-sufficiency for the Career Assistance Program (CAP) participants. It is required by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) regulations and must be completed with each recipient prior to beginning employment and training activities. The IEP provides the opportunity for an accurate appraisal of the recipient's educational and employment goals, as well as indications of any roadblocks or barriers with a plan for resolution of such.

The IEP is a contract between the recipient and the case manager. Case managers must determine **with** the recipient what is a realistic and achievable plan of action to reach their employment goals. This is not a function of the case manager alone.

The IEP is a fluid document, and may be modified at any time as circumstances warrant. The recipient must agree to and sign the IEP when major changes are made. Case managers **must not** modify an IEP without the agreement of the recipient. This is not the case manager's plan, but the recipient's plan for themselves. Major changes include, but are not limited to:

- A change in long- or short-term goals;
- A change in a barrier, whether newly acquired, or overcome;
- A change in household status, from a single parent household to a two-parent household, or the reverse; or
- A change in the recipient's name.

The IEP serves as a plan of action as well as a record of achievement for the recipient and the case manager to develop together and refer to as goals are attained or modified. If the recipient has no pre-conceived idea of what his/her personal employment goals may be, assist in developing those goals using interest surveys, aptitude tests, etc.

The ramifications of the IEP as a contract should be clearly explained to the recipient, i.e., the recipient, with the assistance of the case manager, agrees to perform the activities outlined therein, or risk a reduction in Temporary Assistance benefits.

There is no cookie-cutter approach that will be successful with all CAP recipients. Each recipient has different needs, abilities and motivation. Use the IEP combined with assessment, as a guideline to stimulate the formulation of a meaningful plan and suggest resources for goal accomplishment.

**Guidelines for Completing the IEP**
Complete the IEP at the first significant in-person contact with the recipient, preferably at the time of enrollment into CAP. If there isn't time at the enrollment, complete the IEP at the first available opportunity. Except in the very rare instance of a telephone enrollment, do **not** complete an IEP if the recipient is not present. This is the recipient's plan, not the case manager's.

**Personal Section**
The common data such as name, address, SSN and date of birth will appear on the IEP page when it displays. This information is passed to the IEP from the CAP enrollment page, the SAR, and the GreatHires! record. Review this common data with the recipient for accuracy.

**Deg/Cert/Lic and Veteran Status Sections**
Complete these informational sections as applicable. If there is no degrees, certificates or license information or the recipient is not a veteran, enter "N/A" to indicate that the section was discussed but not completed.

**Desired Positions Section**
The "Desired Positions" section is populated from the GreatHires! record. Review this data with the recipient for accuracy.

**Work History Section**
Complete the work history section with the recipient's current or most recent employment. Update the work history section each time the recipient starts or stops a job, including volunteer work. This information is important to developing the plan because it gives the case manager basic employment information for the recipient at-a-glance. For example, if the recipient has had five jobs in the last year, and the IEP work history information indicates he/she was fired from all five, it is immediately obvious that a discussion regarding *keeping* a job is warranted, possibly combined with a workshop on handling supervision.

**Family Members Section**
Always complete the "Family Members" section for CAP. Include everyone that lives in the recipient's household, regardless of whether or not they are included on the Temporary Assistance case. This is information that may be relevant, for example, to a childcare or transportation barrier.

**Goals and Barriers Section**
The "Goals and Barriers" section must be completed for every CAP recipient, and forms the essence of the plan. Discuss barriers and the accompanying goals in depth. If a recipient has a specific barrier, include an accompanying plan to overcome that barrier, with an expected date of completion. If a recipient has a particular employment goal, but has a barrier preventing attainment of that goal, include a plan to overcome the barrier that is impeding progress toward that goal.

Not all recipients will have entries in all the barriers or goals. For example, the recipient may not have a long-term educational goal, or a short-term employment goal. Elicit this information during the course of the IEP discussion, and develop plans to reach the goal or overcome the barrier.

**Additional Comments**
Use this section to record the number of participation hours required for the recipient. **This is a requirement**. Use the section for any other comments necessary to the case management of the recipient.

**Activity Plan**
This section automatically records the work and work-related activities and end dates entered on the activity page in Toolbox. The activities listed here should be current and consistent with the recipient's long and/or short-term goals.

**Signature Block**
The last portion of the IEP includes a release of information and a signature line for the recipient and the case manager. The case manager should review the contents of the IEP with the recipient once more, ensure that he/she understands the release information, and have him/her sign the document. Give a photocopy to the recipient and keep the original signed IEP in the recipient's paper file.

**Editing the IEP**
If information on the IEP needs to be updated or edited, click on the "edit" link at the beginning of each section. This action will take you to the appropriate screen to make the edits, and will transfer the updated information back to the IEP and other places in Toolbox, as necessary.